

State Option Food Stamp Program for Immigrants

The Supplemental Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 1997 included authority for States to purchase food stamps from the Federal government for use in a State-funded food assistance program for legal immigrants. This development was in response to the limitations on immigrant eligibility for the Federal FSP contained in the 1996 welfare reform act. States design the eligibility requirements for their programs. Some States have chosen not to purchase food stamp benefits from FNS for their program participants. They handle benefit issuance and redemption activities independently. The size of these programs has diminished significantly with the passage of the Farm Bill that incrementally restored food stamp eligibility to major groups of legal immigrants. The last of these restorations occurred in October 2003 when children under 18 years of age regained eligibility. States may opt, however, to continue these programs to serve legal immigrant adults ineligible for the Federal FSP during their first five years in residence.

State Option FSP with Participants Per Month*		Independent State Nutrition Assistance Programs	
4		5	
CALIFORNIA	28,385	CONNECTICUT	
NEBRASKA	179	MINNESOTA	
NEW YORK	5	RHODE ISLAND	
WISCONSIN	510	TEXAS	
		WASHINGTON	
* Average from 07-03, 08-03, & 09-03 monthly counts. Note that participation depends on the scope of the State's program.			

